



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

HLPF 2021 VIRTUAL SIDE EVENT

Building Back After the Pandemic: Work, Health and Well-being

15 JULY 2021
1:00 – 2:30 PM US EST

UN DESA, Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD)

BACKGROUND

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched in 2015, articulates a negotiated international strategy to support environmental and human well-being. The 17 goals and the 169 targets that comprise the agenda are built around three interlinked pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is based on the intensive engagement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other local and global actors. It is guided by a spirit of global solidarity and partnership aimed to mobilize the necessary resources to lift the poorest and most vulnerable out of poverty and promote well-being for all.

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the core United Nations platform for following-up and reviewing of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The 2021 HLPF will take place in July under the theme: *"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development"*.

The 2021 HLPF will examine progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by taking stock of the setbacks caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic disrupted years of progress in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reversing gains in poverty eradication and in promoting healthcare and education for all. The 2021 HLPF will discuss the various responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and address the international cooperation necessary to minimize and control the effects of the pandemic and promote a transformative and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery. It will explore how best to put the world back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, by conducting an in depth review of nine key goals: Goal 1 on no poverty eradication; Goal 2 on zero hunger; Goal 3 on good health and well-being; Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth; Goal 10 on reduced inequalities; Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production; Goal 13 on climate action; Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong

institutions; and Goal 17 on partnerships. The Forum will examine these goals not in isolation from each other but will focus on the synergies between goals and within an integrated and interlinked implementation strategy.

THE VIRTUAL SIDE EVENT

This Virtual Side Event of the HLPF, entitled: “Building Back After the Pandemic: Work, Health and Well-being” will focus on the social development policy aspects related to work, health and well-being. It will discuss post-pandemic recovery by focusing on two critical goals: Goal 3 on *good health and well-being*; Goal 8 on *decent work and economic growth*. There is no doubt that the pandemic placed unprecedented strain on the healthcare systems, especially in developing countries. Indeed, many countries are struggling with weak health systems, overburdened health facilities, inadequate health infrastructure, and poor access to testing, PPE, vaccines and medications. Preventive social measures such as lockdowns and confinements led to the closing schools, offices, enterprises, restaurants, stores and public entertainment. Many people lost employment and livelihoods and countries experienced drastic reductions in productivity and economic growth. Women and girls have been disproportionately impacted with higher rates of job losses and the increasing burden of unpaid care, which is disproportionately carried by women. These disruptions continue to exacerbate already existing socio-economic and gender inequalities, and to expose new ones, such as the wide digital divide between developed and developing nations. In 2019, less than 20 percent of people in developing countries had access to the Internet, compared to 87 percent in developed societies.¹ Digital inequalities directly impact the way societies may be able to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The speakers in this virtual event will consider the impacts of the pandemic on populations in the developing countries and suggest strategies for responding to the effects of the pandemic and ‘build back better’ and more sustainable societies. Based on their areas of expertise, panel members will address health issues in prevention, treatment and access to vaccines and medicines; issues regarding access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods, especially for the youth; transformative social protection issues as they relate to girls and women’s empowerment and equity; as well as youth, climate change and environmental justice.

This virtual conversation will:

- Examine critical impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of these two SDGs.
- Analyze the challenges, the actions and policy guidance required to put back on track the implementation of these SDGs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ World Economic Forum (2020). Coronavirus has exposed the digital divide like never before. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-digital-divide-internet-data-broadband-mobbile/> Accessed on 9 January 2021.

- Assess how the principle of “leaving no one behind” can best be ensured in the implementation of these SDGs against of background of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Address the necessary international cooperation measures and commitments to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Propose key policy recommendations for building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE VIRTUAL PANEL

Provisional date: 15 July 2021

Provisional time: 1:00pm US EST

Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Organizer:

Alcinda Honwana - Inter-Regional Adviser on social development policy, UN DESA-DISD

Alcinda Honwana is Inter-regional adviser on social development policy at the UN DESA’s Division of Inclusion Social Development (DISD). Prior to joining DISD, she was Centennial Professor of Anthropology and International Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and Chair in International Development at the Open University UK. She has conducted extensive research and analysis on conflict and post conflict-reintegration of vulnerable groups, on women’s rights and gender equity as well as on youth socio-economic transitions, youth political protests and social movements. Professor Honwana published several books on these issues and her career has straddled the worlds of academia and policy.

Moderator:

H.E. Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz - Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations

Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz is the at the United Nations. A national of Egypt, Mr. Abdelaziz was the United Nations Special Adviser on Africa, having previously been his country’s Permanent Representative to the Organization from 2005 to 2012. Between 1999 and 2005, he was the Diplomatic Adviser to the President of Egypt, and Official Spokesman of the Presidency. From 1997 to 1999, he was Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, having previously served as Political Counsellor in the New York Mission from 1995 to 1997.

Speakers:

Dr. Michel Sidibé - Special Envoy for the African Medicines Agency (AMA)

Dr. Michel Sidibé is the African Union Special Envoy for the African Medicines Agency (AMA). Dr. Michel Sidibé has championed a people centered approach to health and development for over 40 years. He served as Executive Director of UNAIDS (2009-2019) and as Minister of Health and Social Affairs in Mali (2019-2020). Prior to joining UNAIDS, Dr. Sidibé worked at UNICEF and for Terre des Hommes, where his passion for advancing global health and social justice began. He has been a renowned tireless champion

of African-owned solutions and has been an outspoken advocate for local pharmaceutical production of medicines and contributed to the efforts towards access to quality and safe medicines and vaccines and in fighting global inequities. Dr Sidibé's work earned him widespread recognition. In 2017, he was awarded the Emory President's Medal in recognition of his work as a "passionate champion for health and humanity." In 2012, he was named as one of the 50 most influential Africans by the Africa Report and, in 2009, as one of 50 personalities of the year by the French newspaper Le Monde.

Professor Dzodzi Tsikata – University of Ghana (Accra)

Professor Dzodzi Tsikata is Research Professor of Development Sociology at the University of Ghana. She has been the Director of the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana since August 2016. Before this, she was based at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) during which time she was Deputy Director and Director of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) at the University of Ghana. Prof. Tsikata holds a Ph.D. (cum laude) in Social Science from Leiden University in the Netherlands (2003). Her research has been in the areas of gender and development policies and practices; women's movements and gender equality activism; the politics and livelihood effects of land tenure reforms, among other issues. She has also led research several projects on these subjects and is currently leading an Africa wide project on "Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa."

Dr Duncan Green – Strategic Adviser at Oxfam, UK and Professor of Practice at LSE

Dr Duncan Green is Senior Strategic Adviser at Oxfam, UK and was also the head of Oxfam's Research Department. Dr Green is also Research Professor in Practice in International Development at the London School of Economics, honorary Professor of International Development at Cardiff University, and a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Development Studies in the UK. He has been a Visiting Fellow at Notre Dame University in the US, a Senior Policy Adviser on Trade and Development at the Department for International Development (DFID), a Policy Analyst on trade and globalization at the Catholic aid agency for England and Wales (CAFOD), and Head of Research and Engagement at the Just Pensions project on socially responsible investment. Dr Duncan Green is the author of "How Change Happens" (2016), and "From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States can Change the World" (2008, second edition 2012). He runs a daily development blog, which can be found on www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/

Ms. Ayesha Constable – Young People for Action on Climate Change (Jamaica)

Ms. Ayesha Constable is the Caribbean Representative of the Sustainable Development Solutions Youth Network. She seeks to build awareness of and advocates on matters of youth and environmental justice. She is also a strong advocate for the Young Women's Leadership Initiative and was one of five representatives from the Caribbean who took part in Global Power Shift in 2013 held in Turkey. Ayesha Constable has attended several international forums on youth, girls' rights and climate change including the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, in 2014. She is also a researcher in climate change and agriculture with a focus on the vulnerabilities of small farmers and determinants of adaptation. As an academic she incorporates her interest in youth issues and gender by looking at youth perspectives on climate change, and gender as a key determinant of vulnerability and adaptability to climate change.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HLPF

The Virtual Side Event “Building Back After the Pandemic: Work, Health and Well-being” will contribute to enhance the discussions of the HLPF by providing a broader and in-depth conversation about the social development policy aspects of the health and socio-economic constraints faced by populations affected by the coronavirus pandemic in developing countries, which have aggravated inequalities and harmed their sense of well-being.

The panel will be composed of senior officials as well as policy and academic experts who have been researching about and working on the sustainable development goals in developing countries for many years. Speakers will address prevention and access to Covid-19 vaccines; access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods, especially for the youth; transformative social protection regimes girls and women’s empowerment; and the role of the youth in promoting environmental justice. They will bring diverse perspectives to the conversation, some from the point of view of government policymaking, others from the vantage point of operationalization of policies through actions on the ground, and others from an analytical perspective of how effective the policies, the action plans and the implementation strategies have been, and what concrete effect they may have on the beneficiary populations.